

Section 5 – Jesus’ Discourses

Introductory Video Transcript

Welcome to the fifth section of this course on Jesus in Mark’s Gospel. Up till now, I have emphasized how the gospel is action packed. It seems that Mark was much more interested in telling us what Jesus did, than what he said. However, he also gives us two of Jesus’ longer teachings.

The first, found in chapter four, consists of several parables which describe the Kingdom of God. The second, found in chapter 13, describes the destruction of the temple and Jesus’ second coming. In this section, we are going to focus on these teachings. In the first learning unit, we will look at the parables. It is often said that Jesus taught this way to teach abstract spiritual truths to simple people, using images taken from their everyday life that they could understand. So, since many Jews were farmers, Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to things that they would understand: the sowing of seeds, plants growing, and harvesting.

While there is some truth to this statement, it also obscures a more complex reality. When we look at the parables more closely, we see that they weren’t so easy to understand. At least the apostles didn’t understand them. They have to go to Jesus to ask him to explain them. And his answer is equally confusing. He says that he teaches in parables so that the people will see but not perceive, hear but not understand, lest they turn and be forgiven. What? Does Jesus not want the people to turn, repent of their sins, be forgiven and saved? Obviously not. Elsewhere in the Bible it says that God wants everybody to be saved and that is precisely why Jesus came to us in the first place.

We will study his answer in the second learning unit. And then we will turn our attention to his eschatological discourse, which is also difficult. In it, he says that the sun will stop shining and the stars will fall from the sky, and that all this will take place within one generation. Yet, 2000 years have gone by, and when we look out the window what do we see? The sun is still shining. The stars are still in the sky. Did Jesus get it wrong? Some say so, and they use this point to deny his divinity. We will study this in the third learning unit. I hope you enjoy the material I prepared for you.

As we come to the end of the course, I would like to say a word of conclusion. I hope this course has helped you, not only to know more about Mark’s Gospel and what he said about Jesus, but to grow in your relationship with Jesus. This has been our goal all along. Preparing this course has certainly helped me. I love teaching because I love learning. The best way to learn about something is to teach it to others. As I prepared this course, I have been praying for you. Thank you for being there. I look forward to our next encounter and may God bless you!